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Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOGADI 00285 221118Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USUN NEW YORK 513

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0285

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, SO
SUBJ: SIAD'S COMMENTS TO AMBASSADOR YOUNG

REF: LAGOS 1461

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MOHAME6*.$?-443'S CAVALIER DISREGARD OF FACTS IN HIS FEBURARY 5 MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG, THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL MEETING BETWEEN GSDR OFFICIAL AND AN OFFICIAL OF NEW ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON, ILLUSTRATES DIFFICULTIES OF IMPROVING US/SOMALI BILATERAL RELATIONS, DESPITE APPARENT SIGNS OF SOMALI DISENCHANTMENT WITH SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG, SIAD SEEMS TO HAVE MADE NO

CONCESSION TO US INTERESTS OR SENSIBILITIES, CONTINUING LINE THAT US
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IS CAUSE OF NEARLY ALL MAJOR INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS. FROM THIS IT FOLLOWS, AS SIAD HAS TOLD US ON OTHER OCCASIONS, THAT IT IS UP TO US TO CHANGE ITS FOREIGN POLITICIES GENERALLY AND TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL, PREFERABLY FINANCIAL, GESTURE TO GSDR, SPECIFICALLY, BEFORE GSDR CAN CONSIDER IMPROVEMENT IN US/SOMALI RELATIONS.

2. SIAD'S REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE SOVIET STRATEGIC BASES ON

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SOMALI TERRITORY IS UNDERSTANDABLE IN TERMS OF THIRD WORLD POLITICS BUT NONETHELESS DISINGENUOUS. GSDR HAS FACILITATED MAJOR SOVIET INVESTMENT IN NAVAL AND AIR FACILITIES HERE, AND COLOR OF FLAG THAT FLIES OVER FACILITIES IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS FACT THAT FACILITIES HAVE LITTLE OR NO RELEVANCE TO SOMALI DEFENSE. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO MONITOR AND, IN TIME OF WAR, TO INTERDICT WESTERN SHIPPING AND NAVIES. OUR REQUESTS FOR US SHIP VISIT, WHICH, IF TOOK PLACE, WOULD LEND SOME CREDENCE TO GSDR'S NONALIGNMENT, HAVE BEEN FENDED OFF WITH VARIETY OF TRANSPARENT EXCUSES.

3. FAR FROM REFUSING DROUGHT ASSISTANCE, USG WAS ONE OF PRINCIPAL DONORS OF GRAIN (25,000 TONS OVER 18-MONTH PERIOD) AND OTHER AID (TENTS, BLANKETS, DRY RATIONS TO SOMALIA. THIS ASSISTANCE HAS NEVER BEEN PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND GSDR HAS FOSTERED IDEA THAT USSR WAS MAIN, IF NOT SOLE, HELP DURING DROUGHT.

4. WE AGREE WITH SIAD THAT STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF DJIBOUTI SHOULD NOT BE OVERRATED IN TOTAL PICTURE OF HORN. FROM WESTERN STANDPOINT, TFAI IS POOR POLITICAL PLATFORM FOR MILITARY BASE. FROM SOVIET STANDPOINT, IT IS UNNECESSARY. SOVIETS' EXISTING INSTALLATIONS IN PDRY AND SOMALIA GIVE THEM AMPLE ACCESS TO RED SEA APPROACHES WITHOUT DJIBOUTI. INDEED, SIAD'S "CONTROL" OF HORN IS ILLUSORY. IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT HE COULD DO ANYTHING IN THESE APPROACHES WITHOUT DIRECT ASSISTANCE FROM OR AGAINST THE WILL AND INTERESTS OF USSR.

5. STILL, USG SHOULD WELCOME SIAD'S REITERATION OF DESIRE
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IMPROVE USG/GSDR RELATIONS AND SHOULD TEST MULTIPLYING REPORTS OF SIAD'S DISENCHANTMENT WITH SOVIETS OF RESULT OF LATTER'S GROWING ROLE IN ETHIOPIA. IN SO DOING, HOWEVER, USG SHOULD BE AWARE THAT SIAD IS EXTREMELY PROUD MAN AND TOUGH BARGAINER, WHO WILL NOT FLICH FROM OUTRAGEOUS STATEMENTS AND DEMANDS IN HIS DESIRE TO EXPLOIT US CONNECTION FOR HIS OWN ENDS. US RESPONSE TO GSDR OVERTURES SHOULD BE BASED ON WHAT GSDR DOES AND NOT ON WHAT ITS SPOKESMEN SAY.
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